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CONVENTION COST CONTROLS URGED

GREENWICH, Conn. -- Claiming that "the system just broke down," Council member Harrison Tillman urged the Episcopal Church Executive Council to take steps to prevent a cost overrun similar to that which occurred at the 1979 General Convention.

Tillman, an accountant from Valdosta, Ga., and chairman of the Council Audit Committee, told Council that the Assessment Budget -- from which the General Convention, its committees and commissions and offices are financed -- had ended with a \$47,000 deficit, largely because of unexpected cost overruns in Convention facilities in Colorado.

The Convention itself is financed through a sum from the Assessment Budget and from income of exhibit space and registrations. Both of those latter sources were less than estimated last year and the inflation that caused that loss may also affect the 1982 Convention.

The Assessment Budget is approved by the Program, Budget and Finance Committee and Tillman explained that that panel only increased its Convention funding by \$10,000 (to \$60,000) for the coming Convention in New Orleans.

Pointing to a series of complex charts of Church structure, Tillman noted weaknesses in lines of responsibility between Convention and Council structures which disburse the Convention monies on order.

He called for closer coordination among the Program, Budget and Finance, and the Planning and Arrangements committees with the Executive Office of Convention, its treasurer, manager and the Council finance department.

Tillman and the Rev. Canon James Gundrum, executive officer of the Convention, assured Council that steps were being taken both to recoup the loss and to ensure that the New Orleans Convention was operated under tighter controls making regular use of trained controllers.

The Assessment Budget is one of two that General Convention passes at its triennial gathering. The other -- and larger -- is the General Church Program financed through a different formula and used for the mission and ministry programs of the Church.

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